1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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SOCIAL CUSTOMS.

The Gros Ventre system of terms of relationship has been given in a former publication.[1]

Cousins, so far as the relationship was known, were called brothers and sisters, and they called each other's children son or daughter if the cousin was of the same sex as the speaker, or nephew or niece if the cousin was of the opposite sex. Any known relationship was a bar to marriage. The brother of a dead man sometimes married his widow, but this was not always the case.

Large amounts of property, especially horses, were given away for wives for the honor of the act, but there was no rule or definite custom covering the quantity of property so given. The horses might be given not only to the father, but to the brothers, uncles, and other relatives of the girl. Sometimes, without having received any gifts and apparently without any previous understanding, a man would give his daughter to a young man, who thereupon would give him horses, or distribute them among his wife's other relatives. Old men practised this custom in order to obtain the aid and services of a young man in caring for their horses and in other ways, and no doubt sometimes also to insure a more certain food-supply. A young man on marrying received a tent with all the proper furniture, usually from his prospective parents-in-law, but sometimes from his own parents, if they were the wealthier.

Although a young married man often lived with his father-in-law, the well-known taboo custom between mother-in-law and son-in-law — which forbade their speaking, looking at each other, or being in the same tent — existed among the Gros Ventre. There was, however, no father-in-law taboo. The mother-in-law taboo extended to the son-in-law's brother.

If a woman did not wish a man for her lover, she might send him to do a certain act of bravery. If he returned successfully from war, having accomplished the deed, he was then accepted. This custom is said to have led to the death of many young men.

At a person's death his property was inherited generally by his relatives. His father and mother, brothers, sisters, and children would receive part. His father and mother received the most. A man often disposed of his property before his death. If he died suddenly, as on being killed in war, his parents divided his property. It was not customary for a man on going to war to divide his property among his relatives in the contingency of his death. Property particularly valued by the dead person was buried with him.

[1] Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. XVIII, Part I, pp. 9, 180.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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in-law to do anything of the kind for her mother-in-law. So I gave that daughter-in-law two horses." 606

Although economic obligations were not incumbent, the relationship terms were used, and avoidances practiced, between parents-in-law and the brothers and sisters of the man and wife respectively. It was explained: "The brothers of a man respected his mother-in-law because in the old days it could happen that if a man died his brother might take the wife. And the same with a woman, because they had the custom of giving all the girls in a family to the same man if they liked him." [587]

Siblings of Opposite Sex

Among members of the same generation, the most marked respect was exhibited between siblings of opposite sex, and was extended to include all cousins. There was no relationship term for "cousin," all using sibling terms of address and without distinguishing between parallel- and cross-cousins. 593 605 [601]

Since a girl was removed from her own family at an early age and was brought up in a different household, actual face-to-face contact between brothers and sisters was slight. Nevertheless, their attitudes toward each other had important consequences with many ramifications. As interpreted by the Gros Ventres, the basic relationship between siblings of opposite sex gave clues to understanding expected behavior in several other categories of kinship, —in the avunculate and amitate, as well as in the relations between in-laws of the same sex and generation.

If it could possibly be avoided, brother and sister did not speak to nor look directly at each other. They communicated through a third person. Gros Ventres, who are today in middle age, explained how embarrassed they were as children when the authorities did not understand "the proper way of doing things." For instance, the good sisters and priests in charge of St Paul's, which at that time was a boarding-school, insisted as a privilege for the boys that they visit their sisters on Sunday afternoons in the girls' part of the school! How deeply this feeling of respect penetrates was brought home to the present author by the following incident. "One day she was with Mary and Coming Daylight, while waiting for Charles Buckman, who was to drive her to another part of the

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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605 593 Reservation. She heard the car drive up and, without thinking how it might be interpreted by the other two women, exclaimed: 'Oh, there is my man! I must go!' Since in that neighborhood 'my man' is commonly used to indicate husband or lover, Mary laughed. Almost immediately, however, she caught herself and straightened her face, remarking: 'I shouldn't have even thought that or laughed like I did. That man is my cousin and I should be ashamed of him.' Furthermore when Mary went out with her to get in the car, Charles insisted that Mary sit in the back seat so that everybody could see that they rode in the same car only to accommodate the white woman. Mary remarked later on: 'It is funny, but I just can't bring myself to sit down and have a conversation with my men-relatives, like white brothers and sisters do. I still have a feeling it is an awful thing to talk to my brothers, male cousins, father-in-law and Indian sons-in-law,—although I don't mind in the least talking to my white son-in-law.'"

Brother and sister were expected to grant each other's requests whenever it was in their power to do so and without complaint, regardless of the inconvenience which might be involved. The following incident illustrates how sensitive the Gros Ventres were on this point. "When the present Mrs. Takes-the-Bow was a small girl, she often was sick. One time her father's sister came into the lodge and muttered to herself: 'Oh you are just using up all my medicine in doctoring you—what is wrong with you!' Unfortunately the child's father overheard this impatient comment and was deeply hurt, because very seldom would a woman say anything like that in front of her brother. So he decided: 'My sister considers me a lot of trouble, and if that is the way she feels about it I shall never request her services again.' He meant exactly what he said. He left immediately to go on a war party. Careless of his life, he recklessly rode into the midst of the enemy and was killed."

593 782 721 One way of showing how much a woman thought of her brother was for her to make offerings in his behalf. When young men were going off on a war party, the sister of one of them might go outside the lodge and make a promise along the following lines: "I will give my finger as offering if my brother will come back a great warrior." It was considered a great honor, of course, to